

The Stage and Its People



As We Were Saying—

By Heywood Brown

THE revival of "Romance," with Doris Keane, serves to show once again that manners in drama change pretty completely every once and so often. In comparison with Gilda Varesi's "Enter Madame" of the present season, "Romance" seems stilted and artificial. The piece has had, of course, enormous vitality in the theater, but much of this must be ascribed to the work of Miss Doris Keane. Certainly the play is not appearing on the printed page. "Ah, don't talk that way! But come—see 'ere. You are all shaking—see! you will catch cold!" and all such speeches seemed dull and labored with dialect until an actress smoothes over the rough phonetic reproductions of the Italian tongue and makes it vital.

Doris Keane does that. In the part she is, every inch of her, an Italian. Accordingly, it might be said that since first playing "Romance" she has become more Italian than ever. Now the play seems just a little more like the romance of Tetrastini than that of Cavallini, but it is still glamorous.

Edward Sheldon might say very pertinently in response to any criticism of the printed play that "Romance" was never intended for readers, but only for listeners. The play is full of tricks, not all of which are so bald as they seem upon cold second thought. However, there is one particular dramatic device of Sheldon's which has grown upon him to the point where it seems a little absurd even during the most perfect performance. In his first play, "Salvation Nell," there was a rousing scene in the first act, which was laid in a barroom, in which the heroine was called upon to decide between the advice of two women who were urging her in opposite directions. One was a courtesan, who was tempting her to vice, and the other a Salvation Army lassie. As the argument grew in intensity a band came marching up the street, with "Onward, Christian Soldiers" coming nearer and nearer until it fairly flooded the theater just at the moment that Nell threw herself into the arms of the Salvation Army girl. It was cheap and obvious, but there was an undeniable tug of emotion to the device.

Unfortunately, since that day Sheldon turns to off-stage music upon the slightest excuse. Life, he seems to maintain, is determined by what arias the hand-organ man plays outside the window of each individual at some particular crisis. The hand-organ man is not enough to supply the musical accompaniment for "Romance." There is a phonograph, too, and a German band, and a male choir, and Cavallini herself singing off-stage to the guests of Van Teyl.

The renunciation scene of "Romance" depends upon the male choir. You may remember this as the scene in which Tom comes to Cavallini with an impassioned plea that she give up wickedness and find salvation. She is much moved, and is, indeed, convinced, and it is with horror that she suddenly finds Tom changing in mood from the sentimental to the sensualist. It is at this moment that she makes her plea to him to spare her. It is for him to decide, she says, whether she is to be a good woman or a bad one. Tom's betwixt nature prevails and he gives the

pentant singer his blessing as he departs to join the choir which is marching up town gathering in all waifs for a midnight service. This particular scene has never failed to impress audiences, and yet it seems silly business. The virtue of anybody which depends solely upon the will and whim of another can hardly be said to be particularly persuasive or inspiring.

"Nice People," by Rachel Crothers, has seized upon the notion now prevalent that the young people of our day are a much wilder set than were their grandmothers. Knowing neither the grandmothers nor the young people particularly well, it is impossible for us to say whether or not we believe the validity of the theme. We have seen a good many letters to the newspapers about it, but not everything which gets into the press is to be accepted literally. However, whether sound or not, the theme affords Miss Crothers material for a lively play. Like many plays of the same sort, there is room for the lurking suspicion that the playwright has written her reforming play not so much for the sake of reform as for a logical and plausible excuse to introduce the interesting high jinks which precede reform. One of the benefits of getting into a state of literary rage at any form of wickedness is that you have the privilege of describing that wickedness in a great deal of detail.

Sheridan Theater Soon To Be Added to Greenwich Village

With a seating capacity of 2,500 the New Sheridan Theater is rapidly approaching completion at Seventy Avenue and West Twelfth Street. It will be the newest motion picture playhouse in New York. The theater has a frontage of 263 feet on Greenwich Avenue, 212 feet on West Twelfth Street and 170 feet on Seventh Avenue and is arousing the interest of the residents of Greenwich Village.

Max Spiegel, well known in New York theatrical circles, is president of the Sheridan Theater Company, which is erecting the new playhouse, and William Rafferty is treasurer.

At the Columbia

"Home Brew," a Jack Singer production, is at the Columbia Theater this week. As Mr. Singer has been accorded the summer run at this house four times the excellence of his offerings stands unquestioned, and this new show measures up to the standard of his reputation, as well as to the requirements of Manager McCloy. The presenting company is headed by Harry Lander, who will have the assistance of Amata Pynes, Henrietta Byron, May Lamont, Felix Patti, Bobby Moore, Leo F. Daly, Alice Lawlor, Robert C. Miller and Willie Lander. Sam Wilson and "Tarzan," the human ape, are two of the vaudeville specialties.

At the Neighborhood Playhouse

Arnold Bennett's "The Great Adventure" will play at the Neighborhood Playhouse every evening this week, except Monday, and on Saturday afternoon. "The Great Adventure" is scheduled for a run of four weeks.

Stage Gossip

THE committee on drama of the MacDowell Club announces a "smoker" for members and their guests on the evening of March 20 at which "The Play" will be discussed from several angles. Stuart Walker will speak on "The Producer," Lee Simonson on "The Scenic Artist," Effie Shannon on "The Play Reader," Maurice Browne on "The New Spirit in the Theater" and Edith Ellis on the new organization, "Players' Fellowship," which is one of the latest ideas in cooperation.

Whitford Kane has recently received from St. John Ervine the latest play of the Irish dramatist and will produce it here in the early spring. It is a comedy dealing with the ages-old struggle between the old and the new, the progressive and the conservative, and is typified in this instance by the eager spirit of emigration contrasted with the afraid-to-venture-lest-worse-befall idea.

On Friday evening, March 18, the Yale Dramatic Association will give a performance of Clara Kummer's "A Successful Calamity" at the Plaza Hotel.

Ruth Draper will make her tenth and last appearance of the season tonight at the Apollo Theater. After a tour of the Western cities she will return to London.

On Tuesday afternoon, March 15, at the Little Theater there will be given the first presentation in America of three of the one-act plays by Harold Chapin—"Augustus in Search of a Father," "Muddle Annie" and "It's the Poor as 'Elps the Poor." The program will be augmented by Grace George in the first act of "The New Morality," also by Mr. Chapin. The matinee has been arranged by Mrs. Alice Chapin, of the "Rollo's Wild Out" company, and the mother of Harold Chapin, for the benefit of the charities of All Souls' Church.

Easter Day is the date of the nineteenth annual Green Room Club Revel, which will be given at the George M. Cohan Theater. "High Lights" is the general title under which the current plays are burlesqued, and for this year's edition some exceptional skits have been prepared and will be performed by the members of the club.

"Toto," the new play in which Lee Shubert is to present Leo Dietrichstein on March 21, at the Bijou Theater, is an adaptation of a French comedy by Maurice Hennequin and Felix Duquesne made by Achmed Abdullah. Mr. Dietrichstein, however, has rewritten much of the comedy and has personally produced and staged the piece. His supporting cast includes Phoebe Foster, Warner Baxter, Frances Underwood, Paula Shay, Edward H. See, Orlando Daly, Lee Millar, Emma Knill, Josephine Hammer, Beach Cooke, Clyde Veaux, Gustav Bowhan, M. A. Kelly,

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Carolyn Thomson in "The Right Girl"

Mary Stuart, 'Honey Pot,' To Be Produced Next Week

By Walter Prichard Eaton

DRINKWATER'S "Mary Stuart," which William Harris Jr. will produce March 21 at the Ritz Theater, is one of a series of dramas written or projected by Mr. Drinkwater, in which the leading figure is a historical person. The first play, of course, was "Abraham Lincoln," which ran all last season in New York and is now touring the country. This present drama about poor Mary Queen of Scots will be the second play. The fourth drama which Drinkwater has in mind is based on an American figure, General Robert E. Lee.

Mary of Scotland, from the very day when, a slip of a girl of nineteen, she doffed her widow's weeds and landed through the fog on the soil of her native Scotland, has intrigued (you can't dodge that word) men's minds and hearts. So long as she lived she inspired intense love and devotion and sometimes intense hatred. After her death, with the mysteries of her share in the murder of Darnley still unsolved, she went on inspiring intense partisanship and intense curiosity. By the year 1700, or only a little more than a century after her execution, there were already more than 200 titles listed in a bibliography about her. What the total is to-day it would be a patient librarian who could say. And the mystery remains. Modern historical criticism has been busy with the "casket letters" supposed to show her guilt with Bothwell, and perhaps has failed to shake their testimony. But more to-day than any mystery of guilt or innocence in a crime which was only too like the run of things in that age is the mystery of Mary's personality—her soul, if you will, her individuality. It is that, a reader of Drinkwater's poems can guess, which interests the English poet.

The first thought of Mary is, perhaps, purely pictorial. Here was a lovely, slim girl, with skin so transparent they said you could see the red wine go down her throat, with French manners, with dash and charm—Stuart dash and charm, that never faded well in our England—queening it in rock-ribbed, gloomy Edinburgh, set over against the tough lords, with their skirling bagpipers and the hard fanaticism of Protestant John Knox.

What a contrast! How dramatic! one instinctively exclaims. And then the shadow of Elizabeth of England there to the south, each queen a scheming menace to the other.

But it is no external contrast and conflict which has captured Drinkwater's imagination. In this play Mary does not dash into battle, pistols at belt, nor dance the night through with her court, drawing the men to her by her magic and causing John Knox's epithet of "Honey Pot." What has in-

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New Theatrical Offerings

MONDAY—At the Greenwich Village Theater "The Survival of the Fittest," by George H. Atkinson, will be presented. The cast: Montagu Love, Laura Nelson Hall, Grant Stewart, George Le Guere, William Balfour, Winifred Lenitana.

In the afternoon at the Longacre Theater Sam H. Harris will present "The Hero," by Gilbert Emery, for a series of special matinees. The cast: Grant Mitchell, Kathlene MacDonell, Robert Ames, Blanche Frederici, Jetta Gondal, Graham Lucas.

TUESDAY—At the Times Square Theater the Gleerich Production Company presents "The Right Girl" by Raymond W. Peck. The cast: Carolyn Thomson, Robert Woolsey, Dolly Connelly, Earl Benham, Ruple Holmes, Helen Montrose, Frank Munnell, Elma Decker, Harry Redding, Louis Spalding.

At the Apollo Theater Wilner and Romberg will present Pat Rooney and Marion Bent in "Love Birds," a musical play. The cast: Pat Rooney, Marion Bent, Elizabeth Murray, Eva Davenport, Elizabeth Hines, Emilie Lea, Evelyn Cavanaugh, Grace Ellsworth, Tom Dingle, Harry Mayo, Richard Bold, James E. Sullivan, Barrett Greenwood, Dorothy Quintette, Sylvia Ford, Vincent Lopez and his Kings of Harmony.

Plays Many Parts For Theater Guild And Uses Polyglot

ELEN WESTLEY, who appears in every production of the Theater Guild, says that she will collect one of the best repertoires of dialect in the world, if that organization adheres to its policy of giving plays from all countries. Just now Mrs. Westley plays the part of Lady Marden in "Mr. Pim Passes By," which opened at the Garrick Theater last Monday night. In Bernard Shaw's "Heartbreak House," which preceded "Mr. Pim," Mrs. Westley was also English. But there she played the part of a servant, and between the speech of a cockney servant and the leading lady of the county there is a great difference, as every one knows.

To follow her linguistic course backward, in "The Treasure," by Pinski, Mrs. Westley played the part of a Russian Jewess. Since the Theater Guild opened, less than two years ago, she has also been Irish, Spanish, Swedish and Japanese. Once she played the part of an American, in "Silas Lapham," but, strangely enough, she did not find it any easier to speak in plain "Americano" than she does in the other parts. She has become so accustomed, she says, to playing women of all countries that when she goes upon the stage she quite expects to assume, along with her make-up, another speech than the one she uses offstage.

Lady Marden, in "Mr. Pim Passes By," is not a young woman—she boasts of being sixty-five years old, and is equally proud of the fact that she is a spinster. In one of her speeches she gives, quite unconsciously, her view of marriage when she says: "Didn't you see your first husband die? I should always want to see my husband die." She is justified in her surprise, because her husband's niece, played by Laura Hope Crewes, seems to have been a bigamist, because she overlooked the little matter of seeing her first husband die. And Lady Marden is naturally a trifle surprised when, as she says, "I go down to see the pigs and come back in ten minutes to find that Olivia is a bigamist."

At the Hippodrome

Novelties and new attractions are constantly being added to "Good Times" at the Hippodrome, despite the fact of this being the seventh month of the big spectacle. This week a new scene, "The Magic Grotto," will be added, making the fourteenth in the extravaganza, and in it Nanette Flack, as Neptune's daughter, will have a new musical number, entitled "Sing a Serenade." This will serve as a prelude to the aquatic sports in which the Berlo Sisters and the other divers and swimmers continue to introduce new features. The Pender Troupe of Pantomimists from the Drury Lane Theater Royal, London, afford a unique entertainment, and the old stand-bys, the clowns and the elephants, are always amusing to the adults as well as to the little folk they accompany.

The New Plays

FOUR new theatrical offerings are scheduled this week. McCormick has commissioned Georges Plateau, the French actor now appearing in "The Tyranny of Love" at the Bijou Theater, to arrange for the transfer of plays forming the repertoire of the Parisian house that would be most suitable for production here. Mr. Plateau will appear in some of these plays. At present Mr. McCormick is convalescing from a very serious illness, but he expects to be able to go abroad in time to witness the production of his play, "The Storm," in Paris in April.

The genial spirit of the old green-room, around the very name of which cluster so many of the traditions of the stage, has been revived down at the Neighborhood Playhouse, where a room adjoining the Russian Trakler, the little restaurant that serves guests of the theater, has just been opened for the use of the actors and theater workers. A delightful informality pervades the place, which has become the favorite spot for the hour of relaxation, after the performance, of those connected with the theater and of their friends.

We Ask of Love, What Is It?—Pause for Reply

DR. EDWARDS'S daily complaint in "The Tyranny of Love," now playing special matinees at the Bijou Theater, is that his wife, Margaret, loves him too well. This is how their quarrels go as played by Estelle Winwood and Cyril Keightley:

Margaret—Go on, take your hat. You're only staying to torture me! Dr. Edwards—A person can't breathe a complaint without hurting your feelings! Margaret—What do you care if I am hurt? Dr. Edwards—It worries me. Margaret—Oh, your kindness won't last long. . . . Aren't you ashamed to be so mean after being so loving a while ago? You forget quickly!

Dr. Edwards—What do you expect? All hours aren't alike. We must change the conversation from time to time or it gets monotonous. Margaret—You're right. We can't always talk of love.

Dr. Edwards—We can love each other, but don't talk about it any more. Love isn't the only thing in this world. There's work, and the household and children— Margaret—Children? I don't ask anything better.

Dr. Edwards—Children would require care and attention. Margaret—You mean I'm too much your sweetheart to be a good mother?

Dr. Edwards—You'd unconsciously bear the poor tots a grudge for cutting in on your share of happiness.

Margaret—The children? Dr. Edwards—Yes, the children. Margaret—It's all for the best. Margaret (in a rage)—What misery it is to love! Dr. Edwards—Oh, what torture to be loved!

lines of the Grand Guignol of Paris,